

VZCZCXRO1363
PP RUEHFK RUEHKSO RUEHNAG RUEHNH
DE RUEHKO #1431/01 0920816

ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 020816Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2277
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/USDOJ WASHDC PRIORITY
RULSDMK/USDOT WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J5//
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CC/PA//
RUALSFJ/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA//J5/J021//
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA
RUAYJAA/COMPATWING ONE KAMI SEYA JA
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 2975
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 0516
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 4031
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 9855
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 1452
RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6425
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 2501
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3799

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 09 TOKYO 001431

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR E, P, EB, EAP/J, EAP/P, EAP/PD, PA
WHITE HOUSE/NSC/NEC; JUSTICE FOR STU CHEMTOB IN ANTI-TRUST DIVISION;
TREASURY/OASIA/IMI/JAPAN; DEPT PASS USTR/PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
SECDEF FOR JCS-J-5/JAPAN,
DASD/ISA/EAPR/JAPAN; DEPT PASS ELECTRONICALLY TO USDA
FAS/ITP FOR SCHROETER; PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR;
CINCPAC FLT/PA/ COMNAVFORJAPAN/PA.

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 04/02/07

INDEX:

(1) Futenma relocation: US consul general supplements previous remarks

(2) Futenma alternative: Change unlikely; US Consul General Maher revises previous remarks

(3) Editorial: Iraq law must not be extended

(4) ROK foreign minister urges "Japan to look squarely at its history", criticizes Abe's recent remarks on "comfort women" issue and refers even to enshrinement of war criminals at Yasukuni; Security dialogue to be resumed

(5) Editorial: Is it really true the military was not involved in the mass suicide?

(6) Abe administration at sixth month: Guardian slightly backing off, with subtle alienation growing with prime minister

(7) Six months after establishment of Abe administration: New Komeito trying to play up own political identity and not to be wrapped up in LDP

ARTICLES:

(1) Futenma relocation: US consul general supplements previous remarks

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 3) (Full)
March 31, 2007

Kevin Maher, US consul general in Okinawa, clarified his views yesterday on the pending issue of building an alternative facility (in a coastal area of Camp Schwab in Nago City, Okinawa Prefecture) for the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station. "We have already agreed to locate the runways toward the ocean as much as possible," Maher said. "We think that the location cannot be changed," he added.

Concerning the issue of building an alternative facility for Futenma airfield, Okinawa Prefecture and Nago City have been calling for the newly planned airfield to be shifted to an offshore site in waters southwest of Camp Schwab. Bearing this in mind, Maher told reporters on March 28: "We will fully consider local views and will determine the relocation plan while understanding that we need to place it toward the ocean as much as possible."

In the meantime, Maher has also stressed that the remarks he had made that day were not meant as a revision of the relocation plan. Okinawa Prefecture and Nago City had welcomed that intention.

"I understand that the consul general had expressed his feelings in response to the atmosphere in Okinawa, as the local representative of the US government," one of the Okinawa prefectural government's officials said yesterday. "So," the official added, "we also want to thank him in moral terms." The official also said, "There's no substantial change (in his March 28 remarks)."

The official stressed: "They will respond to local views in the process of determining a detailed location, and Foreign Minister Taro Aso is also flexible about that. I hope they (Japan and the

TOKYO 00001431 002 OF 009

United States) will make comprehensive efforts."

(2) Futenma alternative: Change unlikely; US Consul General Maher revises previous remarks

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 2) (Full)
March 31, 2007

Kevin Maher, US consul general in Okinawa, said yesterday afternoon that he has been misunderstood in his previous remarks over the issue of relocating the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa Prefecture. On March 28, Maher referred to the necessity of considering local requests in connection with the planned construction of an alternative facility for Futenma airfield. "Japan and the United States have already agreed to locate the runways toward the ocean as much as possible," Maher said. "I don't think that there can be any change to that location," he added.

This remark can be taken even as having revised his previous remarks. "His remarks created too big a sensation, so he probably tried to deny it," one of the Okinawa prefectural government's officials said. "But," this official added, "there's no change in what he has said." The official also said: "We also have not asked them to talk about this matter again, and we need to confirm a detailed design. I know his feeling (from his remarks on March 28)."

Maher had told reporters in an interview on March 28: "We will fully consider local views and will determine the relocation plan while understanding that we need to place it toward the ocean as much as possible."

(3) Editorial: Iraq law must not be extended

ASAHI (Page 3) (Full)
March 31, 2007

The government has submitted to the Diet a bill to extend the Iraq Reconstruction Support Special Measures Law for two years.

Under the law, Japan sent Self-Defense Forces troops to war-torn

Iraq four years ago. Although the matter has not been a hot topic since the ground troops withdrew last summer, there still remain some 210 Air Self-Defense Force troops (in Kuwait).

Based at a US base in Kuwait, they have been airlifting supplies between Kuwait and Iraqi cities, including Baghdad, by using three C-130 transport planes. The bill is designed to extend the law to allow the ASDF to continue its airlift mission beyond the end of July.

Many countries in the US-led coalition forces are leaving Iraq. Spain and Italy have withdrawn from the country, and Britain is set to reduce its troop strength by 1,600 by this summer. With Western European forces leaving the country, the weight has shifted to East European forces and former Soviet republics.

Continued commitment to Iraq by Japan, an advanced democracy, must be encouraging to the Bush administration, which has been drawing fire at home and abroad. The significance of the three transport airplanes is expected to grow as a symbol of support for the United States.

TOKYO 00001431 003 OF 009

But that does not mean Japan should continue the ASDF mission endlessly.

We have criticized the Iraq war as unjust and opposed sending SDF troops to that country. Our standpoint remains the same.

The situation in Iraq following the major combat operations has bogged down and it is now descending into civil war. The Middle East is becoming increasingly unstable. What we apprehended four years ago has largely become a reality.

Based on what has taken place over the last four years, the government must reexamine former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's announcement to support the Iraq war and the appropriateness of the SDF mission in Iraq.

A supplementary budget seeking a deadline for withdrawal from Iraq has cleared the US House and Senate. Reflecting the widespread perception that the Iraq war was a mistake, debates calling for a serious review of the war are underway in the United States.

In an Asahi Shimbun opinion poll in Japan, 75% of respondents also said that the Iraq war was a mistake. In addition, 70% of them expressed opposition to extending the Iraq law.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe must respond squarely to such public opinion. Does Japan still think the Iraq war was just? Why is Japan going to continue the Iraq mission despite departures by other countries? The government highly values the Japan-US alliance. How will it react to a strong call in the US Congress for withdrawal from Iraq?

We would like to know why the government intends to extend the Iraq law for two years, which even some ruling members think is too long. Does the government have an exit strategy?

The safety of SDF troops in Kuwait will remain a matter of great concern to the public. Fortunately, there have been no accidents or attacks. SDF aircraft reportedly are forced occasionally to make sharp turns against missiles before landing at airports in Iraq.

There are other ways to help out Iraqi people. Extending assistance to Iraqi refugees would be one way. There is no need to adhere to the SDF mission in Iraq.

(4) ROK foreign minister urges "Japan to look squarely at its history", criticizes Abe's recent remarks on "comfort women" issue and refers even to enshrinement of war criminals at Yasukuni; Security dialogue to be resumed

Hideaki Abe, Cheju Island (South Korea)

Foreign Minister Taro Aso yesterday met with South Korean Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Song Min Soon on Cheju Island, South Korea. Song told Aso, "Erroneous arguments over the 'comfort women' issue are voiced in Japan. Japan needs to look squarely at its history," implying criticism of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hakubun Shimomura for their recent remarks over the question of the military forcing women to work as "comfort women." Song also mentioned the Yasukuni Shrine issue, textbook

TOKYO 00001431 004 OF 009

screening, and the sovereignty of Takeshima (Dokdo in Korean) and revealed his strong concern about historical views.

The two foreign ministers confirmed that they would work together to bring about North Korea's implementation of the first-stage action for abandoning its nuclear weapons programs. They also decided to hold Japan-South Korea security talks (at the bureau director-level) that had been interrupted since the fall of 2003 in Tokyo in mid- or late May. Moreover, they decided to hold a chairmen's meeting of the second round of the joint history study whose start has been delayed.

On the Yasukuni Shrine issue, Song touched on the recent discovery of the fact that the former Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Yasukuni Shrine joined hands to set the standard for enshrinement and noted, "We hope to see you address the issue for a fundamental solution." In response, Aso said to Song: "Primarily, it is the shrine that decides whom to honor." Speaking of the "comfort women" issue, Aso conveyed to Song the prime minister's attitude of standing by the so-called Kono Statement (admitting the military's coercion of women into working in comfort facilities) and sought understanding, noting: "There's no change in the government's position."

Aso indicated to reporters a plan for the foreign ministers of Japan, China, and South Korea to meet on Cheju Island on June 3 timed to the meeting of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) set to take place in South Korea.

ROK looks confident due to closeness with US but distances itself from Japan

Akihiro Makino, Hideaki Abe, Cheju Island

The Japan-South Korea foreign ministerial talks this time did not see any progress on the pending issue of how to demarcate the two countries' exclusive economic zones (EEZs). Both sides are still unable to find an opportunity for their currently icy relations caused by the deep sense of distrust of each other over historical views to thaw. On the other hand, Seoul, which has increased confidence in dealing with the North Korean issues, have become increasingly critical of Japan.

"Discussions were held in an friendly atmosphere, and we devoted 75% of the meeting to future-oriented discussions," Foreign Minister Aso said emerging from the meeting yesterday. However, the fact was that South Korean government officials conveyed in advance to their Japanese counterparts: "The meeting this time will have no special item requiring decision." In fact, the session was held in a cool manner in which neither any joint statement nor any joint press conference was prepared.

Japan and South Korea have many issues to resolve. In the talks on the demarcation of EEZs held in Tokyo in this March, South Korea rejected Japan's proposal for introducing a prior-notification system for marine surveys to be conducted in waters around Takeshima, a disputed island between the two countries. Negotiations aimed at concluding a free trade agreement (FTA), too, have been stalled for more than two years over the treatment of agricultural products. During the session yesterday, South Korean officials urged their Japanese counterparts to show a positive response, but there is no hope at present of Japan coming out with a positive response.

The reason why the two countries' relations have been that stalled is because the relationship between Prime Minister Abe and President Roh Mo Hyun has become "ice cold," as a Japanese government official commented. The two leaders met in last October immediately after North Korea conducted a nuclear test, and the president stressed in the meeting at the time the importance of the so-called historical issues, including the prime minister's visits to Yasukuni Shrine and the "comfort women," instead of the nuclear issue. Some in the Japanese government share this feeling that "everything would go well once the president is replaced."

In the session, both foreign ministers coordinated views in a positive manner on particular issues, such as security dialogue and joint history study, but they were unable to set the resumption of reciprocal visits by their top leaders, which have been stopped since 2005. In the Japan-South Korea strategic dialogue held in this March with the participation of vice minister-level officials, Japan had hesitation about a presidential visit to Japan, noting, "Such a visit needs to produce some results." South Korea was not positive, either.

Meanwhile, the recent closeness between the US and South Korea in dealing with North Korea's nuclear issue has made it easier for South Korea to provide energy aid worth 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil as well as fertilizer to North Korea. The long outstanding issues -- the transfer of the supreme command for wartime operations and the relocation and downsizing of the US Forces Korea -- are now likely to be resolved. Negotiations on a US-South Korea FTA are also moving toward settlement. "Relations between Seoul and Washington have been surely improving," one South Korean government official said. Criticism of Japan over the "comfort women" issue in the US is also boosting South Korea. One certain South Korean government official made this sarcastic comment: "South Korea is reserved about asserting. We think it wise for us to be quiet as the fight between Japan and the international community is unfolding at present."

(5) Editorial: Is it really true the military was not involved in the mass suicide?

ASAHI (Page 3) (Full)
March 31, 2007

In screening high school history textbooks, the government has forced the publishers to make changes to the descriptions of the "mass suicide" that took place in the closing days of the Battle of Okinawa.

The Education, Science, and Technology Ministry specifically raised a red flag on the descriptions that Okinawa residents had been forced by the Japanese military to commit mass suicide, claiming that "it was not clear whether the military had given such orders."

The textbooks' contents was changed in the following way: the part that went "people were forced to commit mass suicides by the military" was modified to "people were driven to the point that they committed mass suicide."

"Some people were forced by the Japanese military into mass suicide" was revised into "some people were driven to mass suicide."

The mass suicide in which people killed each other occurred mostly on the Kerama Islands where the US armed forces first landed. Hundreds of victims committed suicide.

TOKYO 00001431 006 OF 009

As a result of removing the part about the military's involvement, the abnormality of militarism that forced local residents to kill themselves rather than become prisoners of war will fade away. Isn't that a distortion of history?

The textbook screening raises some questions. First, why did the

government decide to eliminate reference to the Japanese military's involvement this particular time? In the previous FY2005 screening, the government took no issue with similar expressions.

The education ministry cited "changes in the circumstances" as the reason for the shift in the screening criteria. The former unit commander who had allegedly issued an order for the mass suicide even filed a lawsuit in 2005 maintaining that he never did such a thing.

It is inappropriate to force the publishers to make adjustments based on a change of that level.

To begin with, the textbook authors did not say that the mass suicide had been forced by the military. They simply wrote that there had been such cases.

The History of Okinawa Prefecture and the History of Tokashiki Village, for instance, are filled with experiences of local citizens who had been given hand grenades as if to encourage them to commit suicide. Does the education ministry reject such poignant experiences, as well? This is the second question.

The late Shinjun Toyama, who had served as military affairs chief at the Tokashiki Village Office, revealed the following story to the Asahi Shimbun in 1988:

"I assembled over 20 noncombatant boys and village officials in compliance with a military order, and a military officer distributed two hand grenades to each one of them, telling them: 'If you encounter enemies, throw a grenade at them. If there is danger of your becoming a prisoner of war, use the remaining grenade to kill yourself.' The mass suicide occurred a week later.

Shigeaki Kinjo, 78, who served as president of Okinawa Christian Junior College, is a living witness. Kinjo was there when the officer disseminated the hand grenades, which did not reach him. Kinjo killed his mother, sister and brother by other means. "A military officer handing weapons to noncombatant members was tantamount to an order for suicide," Kinjo said.

The Abe administration is trying to make it appear that the former Imperial Japanese Army was not directly involved in the recruitment of the so-called comfort women. There seems to be the same motive behind the education ministry's textbook screening.

The Japanese people must not turn their eyes away from painful historical facts. It is education's role to teach the facts squarely to the children, who bear the responsibility for our country's future.

(6) Abe administration at sixth month: Guardian slightly backing off, with subtle alienation growing with prime minister

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)
March 30, 2007

TOKYO 00001431 007 OF 009

Liberal Democratic Party's Secretary General Hidenao Nakagawa visited Aizuwakamatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture on March 29 to deliver supporting speeches for the LDP-backed candidate in the House of Councillors by-election. On the previous day, he visited the office of the LDP Fukushima prefectural assembly members to encourage them. Nakagawa is also scheduled to visit Hiroshima today and Sapporo tomorrow for campaign speeches.

Since the Abe administration was inaugurated, Nakagawa has taken the initiative in reforming the Social Insurance Agency and promoting other challenges, reflecting Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's intentions. As a promoter of reform, he often made statements urging the government and the ruling parties to promote reform plans. But his eagerness seems lacking in his recent speeches.

Nakagawa has devoted himself to preparing for a series of elections prior to the July Upper House election, but he has not been as eager

as before to take the lead in policymaking and party business. Although he expressed his total support for Administrative Reform Minister Yoshimi Watanabe's efforts to reform the public servant system, there is no sign of his being involved in coordination work in the ruling camp.

In a speech in Sendai on Feb. 18, Nakagawa said: "Those who do not stand up when the prime minister enters the room lack the competence required of a cabinet minister." Since then, a distance has begun to grow between the prime minister and Nakagawa. Nakagawa said he expects cabinet ministers to have a sense of loyalty and a spirit of self-sacrifice. Observers take the view that Nakagawa tried to hold in check moves by Foreign Minister Taro Aso, who appears to be aiming at becoming Abe's successor.

The prime minister, though, felt dissatisfied at Nakagawa's remark, taking it as throwing cold water on his cabinet choices. In an LDP executive meeting on March 19, seeing executive members, including Upper House Chairman Mikio Aoki, standing up, the prime minister immediately said, "Don't bother."

After a House of Representatives' plenary session on March 27, former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori thanked Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Toshihiro Nikai, who stayed behind, for his efforts by saying, "You did a good job in Diet management." With Aoki, Mori exchanged views on a campaign strategy. Regarding a distance with People's New Party President Tamisuke Watanuki, Mori told his close aide, "Since I think he is my colleague, I have tried to deepen relations with him."

As it stands, Mori, while refraining from being involved in managing the Abe cabinet and the faction to which he belongs, is eagerly promoting personnel exchanges by making use of his many contacts. Some analyze Mori's moves as part of his strategy for the Upper House election and for a post-election political situation.

Mori and Nakagawa belong to the Seiwa-kai (Machimura faction), from which the successive prime ministers - Mori, Koizumi, and Abe - came. Mori and Nakagawa are regarded as guardians of the prime minister, in a sense. Nobutaka Machimura, who was entrusted by Mori with the task of managing his faction, also called on the faction members during a meeting on March 29 to make utmost efforts to have the prime minister-backed bills enacted in the current Diet session.

TOKYO 00001431 008 OF 009

With an eye to the Upper House, Mori, Nakagawa, and Machimura have reiterated the stance of supporting the Abe administration, but the three have different political motives. Machimura said on March 29, "It is undesirable for us to attack the bureaucracy and be satisfied," in an attempt to apply pressure on the ongoing debate on reforming the public servant system.

On the night of March 5, Mori and Nakagawa met in a periodic assembly with the participation of private citizens, at a Japanese restaurant in Kioi-cho, Tokyo. Some observers take the view that the two suddenly are moving closer to each other, although distanced themselves from each other over the issue of whether to reinstate "postal rebels" in the party.

(7) Six months after establishment of Abe administration: New Komeito trying to play up own political identity and not to be wrapped up in LDP

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)
March 31, 2007

"We want to do our best so that all the 1,725 candidates will win elections," New Komeito Chief Representative Akihiro Ota raised his voice in a street corner speech in Chiba City on March 30. All candidates on the New Komeito tickets were elected for the first time in the previous unified elections. The party has targeted a complete win this time around, as well. Cooperative relations with its ruling coalition partner Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the upcoming national election are gradually becoming delicate.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Ota held a one-hour meeting on March 23 at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). They discussed wide-ranging issues, but the main topic of their discussion was the LDP's reinstatement of former Lower House member Seiichi Eto, who had left the party after opposing postal privatization. The New Komeito expected that votes from the LDP's supporters would go to its candidates in the July Upper House election in the proportional representation segment in return for its support for the LDP's candidates to stand in the electoral districts. However, the New Komeito's expectations have fallen short.

When Eto, who hails from Oita Prefecture, rejoined the LDP, he promised not to carry out political activities in the prefecture. However, chances are that many of the prefectoral assembly members will vote for Eto in the proportional representation segment, not for the New Komeito's candidate. The New Komeito's Oita prefectoral headquarters chief Takenaka angrily said, "This act will spoil the LDP-New Komeito relationship that we have built in Oita."

Aftereffects of Eto's reinstatement into the LDP have yet to disappear. In a Lower House Budget Committee session on Feb. 13, People's New Party Acting President Shizuka Kamei questioned Abe: "Did you meet with Soka Gakkai Honorary Chairman Daisaku Ikeda around last September?" Abe responded: "I did not meet with him." The religious sect side is not satisfied with Abe's reply, with one official saying, "I wonder why he did not admit it." Since Abe called on Ikeda immediately before assuming the prime minister's post, a mood was cleared away in the religious sect that had been critical of Abe's political stances. The LDP won the two Lower House by-elections conducted later, and the Abe administration boosted its momentum.

Appearing on a TV program on March 15, Ota commented on Agriculture

TOKYO 00001431 009 OF 009

Minister Toshikatsu Matsuoka's replies at the current Diet session, saying, "He should answer more sincerely. (In Budget Committee sessions of the two chambers of the Diet) Matsuoka was repeatedly asked about the huge utility expenses claimed in his political funds reports, he then responded: "I have reported based on the law." The New Komeito sees his replies as "inappropriate." The party has called on revising the Political Fund Control Law to oblige the lawmakers to attach receipts for their office expenses worth more than 50,000 yen, but the LDP has been cautious about it. The LDP has no intention to require the politicians to submit the receipts for their office expenses, revising the law.

In the Soka Gakkai's organ paper Seikyo Shimbun, dated March 29, Gakkai Chairman Minoru Harada gave the New Komeito a pep talk, saying, "The New Komeito's presence will increasingly become important." Harada is concerned that the New Komeito may be wrapped up in the LDP. The possibility is that bills having Abe's strong intention, including a bill to set constitutional amendment procedures, will clear the Diet during the current session. Meanwhile, it cannot be denied that time for debate on a bill to review the employment rules, on which the New Komeito places priority, will run out.

In his street corner speech in Chiba, Ota said, "Our party would like to win the unified local elections which are extremely significant for our party as a policy-implementing-party to fight the Upper House election as a challenging political party." The more New Komeito strengthens its own position, the more discord in the ruling camp will come to the fore. If the New Komeito sees its own political identity decreasing, it will weaken its presence. Ota, who served in his present post for six months on March 30, is now being pressed to steer a difficult course in coordinating views with the LDP.

SCHIEFFER